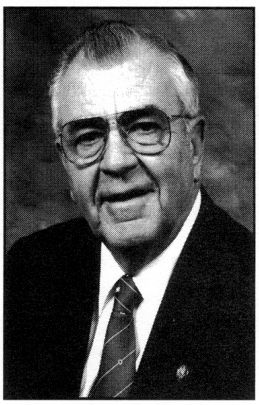
Congressman Herbert H. Bateman
AMERICA'S FIRST DISTRICT — VIRGINIA
News



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Opening Statement of Congressman Herbert H. Bateman Joint Research and Development/Readiness Hearing on Information superiority and Information Assurance - Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century.

I would like to thank my friend from Pennsylvania, the Chairman of the subcommittee on Research and Development for joining with the subcommittee on military readiness for this important hearing. The subject of information technology is a major focus area for both subcommittees and the issues we will discuss this afternoon will assist us in our deliberation on the DoD budget request for fiscal year 2001.

The focus of today's hearing is on information assurance and information superiority. This hearing, however, also provides the military readiness subcommittee the opportunity to address some of our unique issues with respect to information technology.

The Department of Defense has requested $19.9B to fund its Information Technology initiatives for fiscal year 2001. Of this amount, $7.7B resides in the Operations & Maintenance account, or as commonly known as the readiness accounts. These numbers demonstrate that information technology is an indispensable player in the readiness of today's Armed Forces.

The subcommittee on military readiness would like to see an end to legacy, stove pipe systems, and would like to see the services and DoD move together to form seamless and interoperable systems. To do this, the Department needs strong leadership with an unwavering commitment to the principles of the Clinger-Cohen Act. The subcommittee continues to hear the maxim, 'if you want a system to fail, put the word joint in front of it.'

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The subcommittee will look to our witness today, the Assistant Secretary of Defense(C3I) / DoD Chief Information Officer, Mr. Art Money, for such leadership. The subcommittee would like to hear from him why joint programs don't work, and why legacy and stovepipe systems prevail, and finally, what we in Congress can do to assist him in this ever difficult task.

The subcommittee would also like to hear from our witnesses why the Navy has not put its requirements for the Navy Marine Corps Intranet in the budget request. NMCI, as it is referred to, is a contract in which the Navy will give to a private sector contractor the responsibility for maintaining and upgrading all of its video, data, and telephone needs. This contract is scheduled to be awarded in June, and we in Congress have no idea how it will be payed for. There are reports that this contract could have an annual value of $2B. Over the life of the proposed contract this is a $16B effort. I want to know why the Navy did not put this acquisition in its budget, and why DoD has done nothing thus far to address these concerns.

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